A 54

TO THE NONCONFORMISTS OF ENGLAND.

AN

APPEAL

ON BEHALF OF YOUR IRISH BRETHREN.

Being a Reprint from Irish Times, 13th March, 1893,

OF A LETTER FROM

REV. WILLIAM CROOK, D.D. (METHODIST MINISTER).

Special attention is drawn to the concluding clauses of this Letter.

PUBLISHED BY THE IRISH UNIONIST ALLIANCE
DUBLIN:—109 GRAFTON STREET.
BELFAST:—1 LOMBARD STREET.
LONDON:—26 PALACE CHAMBERS, WESTMINSTER.

DA
960
C76
1893
IRISH FOLDERS

HUMPHREY AND ARMOUR

PRINTERS,

CROW STREET, DUBLIN.

The Home Rule Bill.

The following letter has been sent to *The Methodist Recorder* for insertion this week:—

Dear Sir,—I have read the leader in your last issue on "Irish Methodism and Home Rule" with great pleasure, and believe that, however divided the opinion of your readers may be as to the proposed Parliament in Dublin, there can be no second opinion as to the ground taken in your leader—namely, the bearing of what you so justly call "An immense legislative proposal" on the interests of the cause of Christ in Ireland. This I feel to be the point of view from which the Methodists of England, and Christian men all over the United Kingdom should consider the proposal.

I am sorry to learn on the authority of your article that a considerable majority of English Methodists are inclined to look hopefully on the result of a Ministerial success. I was not prepared for this, but, assuming it to be correct, I cannot but think that if they would try to put themselves in our position as a struggling minority, intensely loyal to the British Crown, and intensely hated by a disloyal majority on that ground, and endeavour to look at the question from our point of view, taking into account our superior acquaintance with the tactics of the great foe, and the peculiarities of the battlefield, their views on the subject would right speedily undergo a very great change. On a great legislative proposal which, in the opinion of so intelligent and thoughtful a body as the British Conference, would have a disastrous effect on the interests of the cause of Christ in England, we should, I am sure, in Ireland believe that our brethren in England who had the responsibility before the world of occupying the battlefield in question, and of being actual combatants in the conflict, and not mere spectators, were for that reason in far the best position to form a true view of the gravity of the situation and of the probable

bearing of the proposal on the interests of the cause of Christ. am sure that in the judgment of any one acquainted with the Irish Conference, I do not claim too much for that body when I say that it would be impossible to find a more intelligent, liberalminded body of men in any Conference on the face of the earth; and if that Conference has recorded its deliberate judgment against the proposal of a Parliament in Dublin as being injurious, if not disastrous, to the interests of the cause of Christ in Ireland, English Methodists may well pause, prayerfully pause, before they throw their great influence into the legalising of a measure in direct conflict with the deliberate judgment of their brethren in Ireland. who are not mere spectators but actual combatants in the struggle, and on whom the terrible consequences of the blunder-should it prove a blunder—must inevitably fall, and not on themselves reposing comfortably under the broad shield of the English Constitution. Some of my English brethren may say to me as they read this-"Do not be afraid. When the crisis comes-if it does come—we will affectionately sympathise with you in your trying position, will remember you in our prayers in public and in private, and do what we can for you." I reply, the crisis is upon us now; what will come will prove, as we believe, the catastrophe. And what then? What will your affectionate sympathy be worth in the presence of that catastrophe?' How much will it avail to reverse its disastrous consequences to the cause of Christ in this land?

Amid the present excitement it seems to be forgotten by our friends in England that the Act of Union between Great Britain and Ireland was a solemn league and covenant between the Irish Parliament, representing the loyal minority of that day, and their children, the loyal minority now in Ireland, and the England, representing the British Crown-a Parliament of solemn league and covenant duly signed and sealed, and understood to be enduring in its integrity as the Throne and England. That Act of Union made Catholic honour of

Emancipation possible in 1829. Catholic Emancipation has made the maintenance of that Act of Union vital to the cause represented by that loyal minority with whom England then entered into solemn covenant. The ground taken in 1829 by those in England and Scotland who advocated Catholic Emancipation against the view of many of the loyal minority in Ireland was, that the Act of Union, to the maintenance of which the honour of England was pledged, placed the interests of the cause represented by that loval minority beyond the possibility of future danger from any possible results of Catholic Emancipation, as the Act of Union rested on the stability and honour of the British nation. The late Rev. Thomas Waugh, and other members of the Irish Conference of that day, who were opposed to Catholic Emancipation, fearing a crisis such as is upon us now, were met by the statement that the Act of Union was a solemn covenant which the honour of England was pledged to maintain in its integrity; and hence, that the interests of the cause represented by the loyal minority were placed beyond the possibility of future danger. Believing in the honour of England, the Revs. Matthew Tobias, Gideon Ouselev, William Crook, and many other members of the Irish Conference, advocated Catholic Emancipation, and the thought of a betrayal of their confidence by the English nation never crossed their minds. But, alas for the change that has passed over England in connection with the dishonoured name of Liberalism. I hesitate not to say that, if the provisions of that solemn league and covenant then entered into by the British nation with the present loval minority in Ireland, represented by their fathers in the Irish Parliament, are now treated by England as waste paper, in the face of the solemn protest of that loyal minority, and they are given over by England to the tender mercies of their hereditary foes, it will be an act of national dishonour-nay, perfidyunexampled in English history or in the history of any country in Europe.

How will an Irish Parliament affect the cause of Christ in Ireland? This question I feel to be one of the gravest possible

interest to all the friends of Christ in England and Ireland. I would not attempt to answer it in a hasty way, or without due and solemn thought, looking at all the bearings of the question as calmly and as carefully as I can. I write as a Methodist minister, who may claim to have some knowledge of Ireland and of Irish Romanism, after a lengthened ministry, during which I have been stationed in each of the four Provinces-North, South, East and West; have been repeatedly chairman of the district in these provinces, and have frequently been in every county in Ireland without a single exception. I write further as a Liberal who was a thorough follower of Mr. Gladstone till he went over to the party so graphically described by himself as "Marching through rapine to the dismemberment of the Empire," and during my entire public life have been warmly in favour of the removal of every real grievance of which my Roman Catholic fellowcountrymen had cause to complain. To me the proposal of an Irish Parliament is not a question of party, but a question which I look at in its bearing upon the cause of Christ in Ireland, whether introduced by any government-Whig, Tory or Radical. I have looked carefully at the provisions of the Bill as now published for the proposed Parliament in Dublin; and to my mind it is clear as a sunbeam that its proper designation is "A Bill to promote the Ascendency of Popery in Ireland," placing the loyal minority, who have stood by the Throne and Constitution of Britain, under the feet of their hereditary foes, who hate England and hate them; which will place the entire political power of the country in the hands of the Romish Priesthood, and what this means may be read by any one in the report of the last elections in Meath-North and South -which will destroy all hope of aggressive mission work in our land for our time, if not for all the coming time, which will re-open and intensify the conflict between Catholic and Protestant, and exert a most disastrous influence upon Protestantism all over our land. If you will afford me the opportunity, I will undertake to establish these statements beyond the possibility of refutation; but

I have already trespassed sufficiently on your space, and conclude by giving your readers the following extract from Catholic Progress for June, 1882, a journal well known both here and in England, published by the London Jesuits and edited by the Rev. Albany Christie, S.J., which will open their eyes as to what Protestantism may expect from a Parliament which must be in the nature of things at least three-fourths Roman Catholic—all, or nearly all, the nominees of the priesthood. The following is the statement which this journal is not ashamed to publish:-" The woes of Ireland are all due to one simple cause—the existence of Protestantism in The remedy could only be found in the removal of that which caused the evil, which still continues. Why were the Irish not content? Because being Irish and Catholic, they are governed by a public opinion which is English and Protestant. Ireland is governed as a Catholic nation, and free scope given to the development of the Catholic Church in Ireland by appropriating to the Catholic religion the funds given to religion, a recurrence of such events * as are now taking place cannot be Would that every Protestant meeting-house were prevented. swept from the land, then would Ireland recover herself, and outrages would be unknown, for there would be no unbelievers with her champions." If this would not open the eyes of English Methodists and Nonconformists generally they must be given over to strong delusion.

I am, sir, yours most truly,

WILLIAM CROOK.

Wicklow, 1893.

^{*} Murder of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, May 6th, 1882.

BC798904